

5 **I claim:**

1. A keypad comprising:

a plurality of keys each having at least one predetermined function for a respective plurality of selective operations; and

an indicating arrangement for identifying a selected one of the plurality of keys.

10

2. The keypad of claim 1 wherein the indicating arrangement indicates an active operational state of the selected key.

3. The keypad of claim 1 wherein the indicating arrangement comprises actuatable color means for producing a predetermined color on the selected key.

4. The keypad of claim 3 wherein the color means comprises an actuatable illumination element.

5. The keypad of claim 1 wherein the indicating arrangement comprises a display for displaying indicia on the selected key.

6. The keypad of claim 5 wherein the means to display indicia comprises an actuatable alphanumeric display.

25

5 7. The keypad of claim 1 wherein the indicating arrangement comprises at least one
virtual key selectively programmable to emulate the at least one predetermined function of the
selected key.

10 8. The keypad of claim 7 wherein the virtual key is displaced from the plurality of
keys.

9. The keypad of claim 7 wherein the indicating arrangement further comprises
means for producing a visible distinction on at least one of the selected key and the virtual key.

15 10. The keypad of claim 9 wherein the means for producing comprises actuatable color
means to produce a predetermined color.

20 11. The keypad of claim 9 wherein the means for producing comprises an actuatable
illumination element.

12. The keypad of claim 7 wherein the means for producing comprises a display for
displaying indicia on at least one of the selected key and the virtual key.

25 13. The keypad of claim 12 wherein the display comprises an actuatable alphanumeric
display.

5 14. The keypad of claim 7 wherein the at least one virtual key comprises a plurality of
virtual keys, each selectively programmable to emulate the predetermined functions of a
respectively plurality of keys.

10 15. The keypad of claim 14 wherein the indicating arrangement further comprises
means for producing a visible distinction on at least one of a predetermined virtual key and its
respective counterpart selected key.

15 16. The keypad of claim 15 wherein the means for producing a visible distinction
comprises producing a visible distinction between a plurality of respective pairs of predetermined
virtual keys and their respective counterpart keys.

20 17. The keypad of claim 16 wherein the means for producing a visible distinction
comprises means for actually selecting from at least one of differences in color and illumination.

25 18. The keypad of claim 16 wherein the means for producing a visible distinction
comprises an actuable display for displaying variable indicia on each of the plurality of
respective pairs.

 19. The keypad of claim 7 wherein the at least one virtual key is selectively
programmed to consecutively emulate the predetermined functions of a plurality of the keys.

5

20. A keypad comprising:

a plurality of keys each having at least one predetermined function for a respective plurality of selective operations; and

an indicating arrangement for identifying a selected one of the plurality of keys, wherein the indicating arrangement comprises at least one virtual key selectively programmable to emulate the at least one predetermined function of the selected key.